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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (01/14): U.S. RIGHTWING SUPPORT  
FOR ISRAELI RIGHTWING

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Main Stories:  
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All papers lead with news that the Palestinian death toll is nearing 1,000 in Gaza fighting which included intensive Israeli air strikes and ground battles with Palestinian militants on the 18th day of "war in Gaza." Al Quds notes that 311 children have been killed so far, while Al Ayyam highlights the January 13 Palestinian death toll of 45, with 140 injured. Front pages highlighted January 13 statements about a "humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza made by international organizations such as Human Rights Watch and UNRWA. In photo coverage, Al Quds and Al Ayyam lead with a photo of the aftermath of an Israeli air strike on a Gaza neighborhood, billowing with smoke and fire. Al Hayat Al Jadida leads with a photo of a Palestinian woman sitting on the remains of her furniture, after the, shelling and destruction of a residential tower in Gaza."

Congressional hearing statements by Secretary of State designate Clinton appear on all front pages. Clinton is quoted expressing support for Israel's right to defend itself and belief that at a peace agreement would bring independence, economic development and security to the Palestinians. Clinton is also quoted calling for a more "conciliatory" foreign policy. She also promises dialogue with Iran but rules out dialogue with Hamas as long as it does not accept the three conditions of the Middle East Quartet.

Statements by State Department spokesman McCormack are highlighted on Al Quds' front page. Citing DPA, the paper quotes McCormack refuting recent statements by Israeli Premier Olmert that he influenced, via a conversation with President Bush, the U.S. vote on U.S. Security Council resolution 1860. Ma'an online news agency notes that Olmert's version on events has, "many holes." In a separate front page story, Al Quds reports that a Pentagon spokesman said on January 13 that the US has decided to cancel an ammunition

shipment to Israel through Greece, after announcing that Greece was facing difficulties in releasing the shipment to Israel. Greece must request US permission to access the ammunition, according to the report.

In Arab diplomatic efforts, all front pages report on obvious division among Arab states regarding attendance at a summit on Gaza to be hosted by Qatar on January 16. Saudi Arabia and Egypt reportedly refused to attend the summit, preferring to discuss Gaza issues at an economic summit to be held in Kuwait on January 19. The countries stated that it was not appropriate to attend a summit that was not initiated by Arab foreign ministers (rather than Qatar.) For his part, Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa is quoted stating that 13 Arab states, including the Palestinian Authority, have expressed a willingness to attend the Doha summit, which would require at minimum, the attendance of 15 Arab states. In Gaza ceasefire news, Al Quds' front page cites AFP in quoting UN Secretary General Ki-Moon calling on January 13 for a halt to the fighting that has claimed many casualties. In separate reporting, the same front page adds that Israel has rejected a Hamas proposal for a one-week ceasefire and the reopening of Gaza crossings. The paper reveals that the proposal was passed to Israel through Egypt. Meanwhile, Al Ayyam's front page quotes "Israeli sources" stating that the next 48 hours will be decisive in terms of Israel's willingness to negotiate a ceasefire and that the Israeli Government has not ruled out the possibility of launching a third stage of its military operations in Gaza.

Al Quds and Al Ayyam front page statements by Palestinian Authority President Abbas stating on January 13 that Israel is trying to, "annihilate our people in Gaza, through its aggression there."

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Meanwhile, Al Hayat Al Jadida's front page and inside Al Quds, runs a wire quote by former Israeli minister and head of Israel's Beiteinu party, Avigdor Lieberman, calling on Israel to drop a nuclear bomb on the Gaza Strip, "to destroy it completely. We should act exactly as the USA did with Japan in WWII." All papers dedicate significant coverage to solidarity activities being held in the West Bank and internationally for the people of Gaza.

Non-Gaza deaths are highlighted on Al Ayyam's and Al Hayat Al Jadida's front pages that reports on the killing of two Palestinians on January 13 by the Israeli military in Tarqumiyah near Hebron in the southern West Bank, and one Palestinian killed by Israeli settlers in Azzun, near Qalqiliyah in the northern West Bank.

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BLOCK QUOTES:  
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1) Al Quds editorial is titled, "Gaza civilians are the victims of aggression" (01/14): "There is no justification whatsoever for constantly targeting civilians and demolishing houses with mortars and rockets; even during the few hours declared by Israel as a lull time; even if there were Palestinian fighters among the civilian population... the final picture of the post-aggression war [situation]... is becoming clearer: Israel will not achieve victory in Gaza, even if it occupies it completely, because... the Palestinian people's will and their determination to enforce respect for their rights, regardless of the means, cannot be stymied or broken."

2) Hamada Farana writes in Al Ayyam under the title, "Internal Israeli unity vs. Palestinian disarray" (01/14): "Our Palestinian people have paid a high price in an unequal battle... [therefore] wise Palestinian efforts, supported by a responsible Arab consensus and international solidarity, focus on minimizing the expected losses. The Israeli extremist right wing, supported by the no-less extremist American right wing, has shifted from proposing to erase the decision, aspirations and rights of Palestinians to an independent state, to making proposals that will destroy the rights of Palestinians and scatter them among Israel, Jordan and Egypt..."

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